



DONALD L. WOLFE, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE:

WM-0

December 17, 2007

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Donald L. Wolfe 
Director of Public Works

FRIENDS OF THE LOS ANGELES RIVER MURAL

Recently the Friends of the Los Angeles River (FOLAR) commissioned a mural within a portion of the Arroyo Seco Channel near its confluence with the Los Angeles River. This portion of the Arroyo Seco Channel is located within Supervisorial District 1.

The mural was painted during a three-day event in conformance with an Encroachment Permit we issued. The permit was issued with the understanding that FOLAR was to obtain City of Los Angeles' concurrence with the content. We were also told in earlier meetings that the mural would contain images in line with FOLAR's mission.

Subsequent to the event, I was made aware the mural contained inappropriate images and profanity. Additionally, we have experienced a large increase in illegal entry and defacing of flood control right of way consisting of tagging and graffiti over and beyond the limits of the original mural. We have determined that this increase in unauthorized activity is directly related to FOLAR-sponsored advertisement of the mural and its location on the worldwide web.

We have been in discussion with FOLAR since the event in attempt to have that organization take responsibility for removing the inappropriate images displayed on our right of way and to clean the tagging and graffiti related to the original mural as required in all standard Public Works' permits. FOLAR has been slow to react to our request.

In recent weeks graffiti was placed adjacent to the mural containing gang-related references to murder of a political official and graphic images.

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Due to the escalating nature of the defacement of the public right of way, we have determined it is in the District's best interests to remove the original mural and all associated graffiti and tagging within the Los Angeles County Flood Control District right of way.

County Counsel has recommended that prior to removing the mural, we follow the applicable notice requirements and procedures of the California Art Preservation Act. We will work with County Counsel in drafting the appropriate notice.

MP:ad

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cc: Chief Executive Office (William T Fujioka, Lari Sheehan)
County Counsel
Executive Office